

MORE ON PERFINS FROM COILS

by Tony Edwards

I was interested by Dr Powell's article in issue No. 226 regarding perfins from coils and it led me to look further into this much neglected aspect of perfin collecting. My first question was why bother to perfin coils. They are far more difficult to perfin than any other form of stamp arrangement, except in an automatic stamp affixing machine. However if the stamp is to be automatically affixed immediately after perfinning the whole exercise seems pointless.

My next question was how common are they and after searching through many thousands of GB perfins the answer was very uncommon indeed. In the June/August 1985 issue of the Perfins Bulletin Donald Whitehead lists some thirty examples of perfinned stamps known with sideways watermarks, but an extensive search through many thousands of GB perfins produced very few for me. One interesting example, not reported earlier, proves to be W/UD of Wiltshire United Dairies, Trowbridge. I found three different variations of these letters on King George VI and Elizabeth issues, W7730.01 W7730.02 and a third previously unrecorded die to become W7730.03. All these are on sideways watermarked stamps showing extensive use over a long period.

Identifying sideways watermarks amongst thousands of photogravure issues is a difficult task and I soon tired so changed my line of investigation. In our No 226 issue Dr Powell had suggested coil stamps can be identified by seeking clipped perfs. This is far easier and soon my pile of stamps of interest started to grow. Unfortunately very few turned out to have sideways watermarks. What then of the others? Presumably from coil machines using upright watermarked stamps. Interesting for that, but not of great Importance, not that is until I looked closely at the perfins.

The vast majority of stamps with upright watermarks and clipped perfs had unusual letters. It is difficult to explain why they are unusual but a glance at the illustrations below show what I mean. The letters have a continental look and some such as J and T are very distinctive. Also they are usually found with a pair of letters near the top of the stamp and a single letter near the centre (although two and one letter dies appear). I would be interested to hear of the latest and earliest stamps bearing these unusual shaped perfins.

Clearly there is a lot of interesting facts to be discovered about stamps from coils, with and without sideways watermarks and I would be interested to hear from anyone with any ideas or information. In a future issue I will provide a more detailed summary of this neglected area of perfin studies.

